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Throw-'em-in-the-brig Turner?

ADMIRAL Stansfield Turner, who heads the Central Intelligence Agency, says persons who leak classified information to the press should be put in jail, as an example and a deterrent to others.

Testifying before the Senate Intelligence Committee, Adm. Turner said in part:

"We in the intelligence community feel that the country desperately needs to prosecute these offenders in the name of deterring others. . . My blood boils at the obvious callousness and selfishness of such persons (who leak information), and I believe they

more than deserve the punishment which may result from prosecution."

The only problem with the Turner formulation is that the bureaucrat who wields the classification stamp may be more interested in protecting himself or his superior from justified criticism than in protecting the nation's legitimate secrets from hostile eyes.

If Congress is disposed to listen seriously to Adm. Turner, it should draft legislation which guards against abuses of the classification power while protecting the nation's secrets.

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